

Amillennialism: Hermeneutical & Theological Presuppositions

“Timing and nature of Jesus’ millennial kingdom reign.”

I Hermeneutical Presuppositions:

1. *Historical-grammatical exegesis*

Drawing out the meaning of the text by careful, detailed analysis,
studying the:

1. Grammatical: the language (grammar, syntax) of the original text (or translations)
2. Historical: the specific cultural context...in relation to the canonical context

2. *Scripture uses language, imagery and ideas familiar to its original audience*

Isaiah 2:4 “ He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”

Just how literal or figurative?

Literal:

Semi-literal / semi-figurative:

Figurative:

Riddlebarger: “...the Old Testament prophets and writers spoke of the glories of the coming messianic age in terms of their own pre-messianic age. They referred to the nation of Israel, the temple, the Davidic throne, and so on. {*A Case for Amillennialism*, 51}”

3. Typology: OT types correspond to NT antitypes

- Type/Antitype = person, event/action, series of circumstances, or institution

1. Correspondence between type & antitype

1-1) *Historical* correspondence

1-2) *Theological* correspondence

2. Escalation

3. Type is not a predictive prophecy but *a pattern*

- Biblical examples:

<i>Persons:</i>	Adam, Solomon, David, Jonah, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah
<i>Events:</i>	the Passover, Israel in the wilderness, temptation, Exodus
<i>Actions:</i>	lifting up of the bronze serpent (Jn 3)
<i>Religion:</i>	the temple and its furnishings (Heb 9)
<i>Institutions:</i>	Levitical priesthood & sacrificial system (Heb 9)
<i>Offices:</i>	Aaron as Priest (Heb 8-9); Moses as Prophet (Heb 3); David as King

Riddlebarger: “These all reflect the language, history, and experience of the people to whom these prophecies were originally given. But eschatological themes are reinterpreted in the New Testament, where we are told these Old Testament images are types and shadows of the glorious realities that are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. {*A Case for Amillennialism*, 51}”

4. The “Analogy of faith”

“Scripture interprets Scripture.”

- 4-1. Clear before the difficult (2 Peter 3:1-13 before Revelation)
- 4-2. Literal before the figurative (Gospels/epistles before apocalypse/prophecy)
- 4-3. Didactic focus (Matthew 24-25; 2 Peter 3:1-13; 2 Thess 2:1-12)

II Biblical-Theological Presuppositions:

1. The Bible is a unified, redemptive-historical narrative

- The continuity of history is a focus on the redemptive-historical narrative

Creation -> Fall -> Redemption -> Restoration

New Creation (restoration) is the eschatological goal of history

- Biblical history unfolds as a unified revelation

2. OT Expectations from Covenants, Prophecy & Types

2-1. The coming Messiah-Redeemer:

- Prophet (Deut 18:15)
- Priest (Ps 110:4)
- King (Zech 9:9; 2 Sam 7:12-13; Is 9:7)

2-2. New (and better) Covenant (Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 37)

2-3. The restoration of Israel through the Messiah:

- Land: Canaan - land of promise (Gen 12:1; 15:7, 13-21; 17:7-8)
 - City: Jerusalem (Micah 4:1-5)
- Seed: offspring (Gen 12:3; 15:1-6, 13, 18; 17:4-7)
- Blessing: to all nations (Gen 12:2-3; 15:1-21; 17:1-8; Is 49:6; 60:1-3)
- Throne: Kingdom of David (2 Sam 7:12-16; Is 9:7; Ps 2:7-9)
- Temple: The tent/tabernacle/temple of God (Exod 25:8; 33:9; 40:34; Lev 9:23; Num 14:10; 2 Chron 5:7, 14; Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-5; Ezekiel 40-48)

3. See the NT as the progressive lens: The NT interprets and applies the OT

As Jesus and the NT authors interpret and apply the OT, especially the covenants, prophecy, and types, what does the NT teach?

Christ is the interpretive lens or key (2 Cor 1:20; Mt 5:17; 13:11, 16-17; Luke 24:25-27, 32, 44-48; Jn 5:39; 20:9; Rom 10:4; 1 Pet 1:10-12)

III Amillennial Eschatology:

1. Structure of NT eschatology: Two Ages

Scriptures provides a simple 2-age eschatological structure: this age & the age to come
(Matt 12:32; Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30; 16:8; 20:34-36; Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 4:4; 1 Cor 1:20; 2:6, 8; 3:18; Gal 1:4; Eph 1:21; 2:2; 1 Tim 6:17-19; Titus 2:12; Heb 6:5)

- John uses “the world (cosmos)”
- Matthew’s “consummation of the age” (Mt 13:22, 30, 39, 40, 49; 24:3; 28:20)

1-1. All time is captured in the 2 ages structure (Mt 12:32 ~ Mk 3:29; Mk 10:30 ~ Lk 18:30)

1-2 The 2 ages are qualitatively different (Lk 20:27-40; Mt 13:24-30, 36-43)

This Age	The Age to Come
	No
	No
men	men
co-exist	

- “This age is *and always will be* an evil age [Waldron]”
- This age is in its “last days” (1 Cor 2:6; 10:11; 1 Jn 2:8, 17; Heb 9:26)

1-3 The 2 ages are divided by the consummative events at the end of this age – return of Christ, resurrection, judgment (Lk 20:35; Mt 13:39-43; Titus 2:12; Jn 6:39)

- The return of Christ begins the consummation - the *last day* of this age (Titus 2:11-13; Mt 28:20; Jn 6:39-40, 44, 54)
- At the coming of Jesus, the resurrection occurs (Jn 6:39-40, 44, 54; 1 Cor 15:22-23, 50-55; 1 Thess 4:16-17)
- The harvest gathering is at the end of this age (Mt 13:30, 39)
- Judgment after the return of Christ (Rev 20:11-15; Mt 25:31, 46)
- Judgment leads to eternal state - punishment of wicked OR life for righteous (Mt 13:40-43; Mk 10:30, Mt 25:31, 46)

2. The fulfillment of the messianic age in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer

2-1. Jesus Christ the Messiah not only represents but is the true Israel of OT

Isaiah 41-53 the servant of Israel

> Lk 2:32; Acts 13:47; 26:23; Mt 8:14-17; Acts 3:13, 26

2-2. The “fulfillment” of OT typology and prophecy in Jesus Christ

1. The coming Messiah-Redeemer:

- Prophet (Deut 18:15-19)
 - > Mt 17:5; Heb 3
- Priest (Ps 110:4)
 - > Heb 8-10; Rom 8:34; 1 Jn 2:1; 1 Tim 2:5
- King (Zech 9:9; 2 Sam 7:12-13; Is 9:7)
 - > Mt 2:2; 21:5; 27:11

2. New (and better) Covenant (Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 37)

> Mt 26:28; 1 Cor 11:23-25; 2 Cor 3:2-6; Heb 8:6-13; 10:16-18

3. The restoration of Israel through the Messiah:

- Land: Canaan - land of promise (Gen 12:1; 15:7, 13-21; 17:7-8)
 - > Universalized – New Heavens and New Earth (Is 65:17-25; Rom 4:13; 2 Pet 3:13; Heb 11:10)
 - City: Jerusalem (Micah 4:1-5)
 - > heavenly city Heb 12:18-24
- Seed: offspring (Gen 12:3; 15:1-6, 13, 18; 17:4-7)
 - > through union with the one seed, Jesus Christ (Gal 3)
- Blessing: to all nations (Gen 12:2-3; 15:1-21; 17:1-8; Is 49:6; 60:1-3)
 - > fulfilled in and blessed through the Servant of Israel, Jesus
- Throne: Kingdom of David (2 Sam 7:12-16; Is 9:7; Ps 2:7-9)
 - > Jesus sits enthroned as Lord - Peter's sermon in Acts 2:29-36
- Temple: The tent/tabernacle/temple of God (Exod 25:8; 33:9; 40:34; Lev 9:23; Num 14:10; 2 Chron 5:7, 14; Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-5; Ezekiel 40-48)
 - > Jesus is the temple (Jn 1:14; Mt 12:6; Col 1:19; Heb 1:3, 10:10, 19-22)
 - > The church is the temple (Eph 2:21-22; 1 Cor 3:16-17, 6:19-20; 2 Cor 6:16)

2-3 *God has one people: The Israel of the OT, the Church of the NT*

- Jesus Christ represents the true Israel – the church – of the NT (Gal 3)
- “Church” is used for the congregation of Israel (LXX; Acts 7:38; Heb 2:12)
- God’s elects, redeems, and covenants to create both Israel & Church
- OT promises to Israel are *fulfilled* in the church (e.g. temple, New Covenant)
- Israel and the Church share the same characteristics:

<u>OLD ISRAEL</u>	<u>NEW ISRAEL</u>
Saints--Num. 16:3; Deut. 33:3	Saints--Eph. 1:1; Rom. 1:7
Elect--Deut. 7:6, 7; 14:2	Elect--Col. 3:12; Titus 1:1
Beloved--Deut. 7:7; 4:37	Beloved--Col. 3:12; 1 Thess 1:4
Called--Isa. 41:9; 43:1	Called--Rom. 1:6, 7; 1 Cor. 1:2
Church--Ps. 89:5; Mic. 2:5 (LXX) Act. 7:38; Heb. 2:12	Church--Eph. 1:1; Acts 20:28
Flock--Ezek. 34; Ps. 77:20	Flock--Luke 12:32; 1 Pet. 5:2
Holy Nation--Exod. 19:5, 6	Holy Nation--1 Pet. 2:9
Kingdom of Priests--Exod. 19:5, 6	Kingdom of Priests--1 Pet. 2:9
Peculiar Treasure--Exod. 19:5, 6	Peculiar Treasure--1 Pet. 2:9
God's People--Hos. 1:9, 10	God's People--1 Pet. 2:10
Holy People--Deut. 7:6	Holy People--1 Pet. 1:15, 16
People of Inheritance--Deut. 4:20	People of Inheritance--Eph. 1:18
God's Tabernacle among Israel--Lev. 26:11	God's Tabernacle among Church--John 1:14
God walked among them--Lev. 26:12	God walks among His People 2 Cor. 6:16-18
Twelve Patriarchs	Twelve Apostles
Christ married to His people--Isa. 54:5; Jer. 3:14; Hos. 2:19; Jer. 6:2; 31:32	Christ married to the Church--Eph. 5:22, 23; 2 Cor. 11:2

Note: From lectures series by Dr. Sam Waldron <http://www.vor.org/truth/rbst/escatology08.html>

- The NT refers to the Church as the true Israel of God (1 Cor 10:18; Rom 2:28-29; 9:6-8; Php 3:3; Gal 6:16)
- NT affirms the unity of God’s one people (Gal 3:6-29; Rom 11:16-24; Eph 2:11-19)
- Israel and the Church share the same eschatological unity (Mt 8:11,12; Jn 10:16; Heb 11:39-40; Rev 21:9-14)

2-4 *The messianic fulfillment is inaugurated but not yet consummated*

- “The age of the eschatological fulfillment has come in Christ. {Beale}”
Mark 1:15; Acts 2:17; 1 Cor 10:11; Gal 4:4; 1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim 3:1; Heb 1:2,
9:26; 1 Pet 1:20; 2 Pet 3:3; 1 John 2:18; Jude 18
- Redemptive-historical blessings are inaugurated but not yet consummated (Heb 6:4-6; Eph 1:21; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15)